



See below to register for upcoming free disaster training sessions during June in Imperial and McCook.

“A tornado has hit the elementary school in Grant”—this was the beginning statement of an emergency tabletop exercise held on Monday evening, April 29, at the Grant fire hall.

Jim Brueggeman, Perkins County emergency manager/sheriff and Heidi Wheeler, emergency response coordinator for Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) created the tornado disaster exercise to help numerous organizations hone their emergency planning skills.

“We were very pleased with the execution of responsibilities, communications between fire and law enforcement and the increased awareness of public information portrayed in the exercise,” explained Brueggeman.

Several organizations were involved in the exercise: Perkins County Emergency Management, Venango Fire Department, Madrid Fire Department, Elsie Fire Department, Grant Fire Department, Perkins County Sheriff’s Office, Perkins County Hospital, Grant Ministerial Association, Bullock-Long Funeral Home, Perkins County Attorney, and Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department.

Every entity reported their response actions at intervals of 30 minutes, one hour and four hours “post-disaster.”

The scenario included numerous fires, gas explosions, and injuries following the tornado that required tremendous communications among all agencies and public information to the people of the community.

“Perkins County operates like a well-oiled machine under the leadership of Sheriff Jim Brueggeman, emergency manager; Don Softley, fire chief; and Fred Reichert, assistant chief,” stated facilitator Wheeler. “It was great to see all the different agencies and organizations involved and committed to the preparedness of this community and working so well together.”

Volunteers are vital to emergency preparedness and SWNPHD will be hosting a Volunteer Disaster Training, at no cost, on June 14 from 8 a.m.-5 p.m. at McCook Community College or

June 15 8 a.m.-5 p.m. at Mid Plains Community College Extended Campus in Imperial.
Registration is due by May 31. Register by calling 308-345-4223 or email Heidi Wheeler at erc@swhealth.ne.gov.